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ViCCA Visual Culture Curating and Contemporary Art

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TOWARDS THE UNTIMELY

PURSUING THE CENTER OF THE CLOCK AS ZONE FOR SPECULATION INTO TEMPORAL PRACTICES

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Master of Arts thesis abstract

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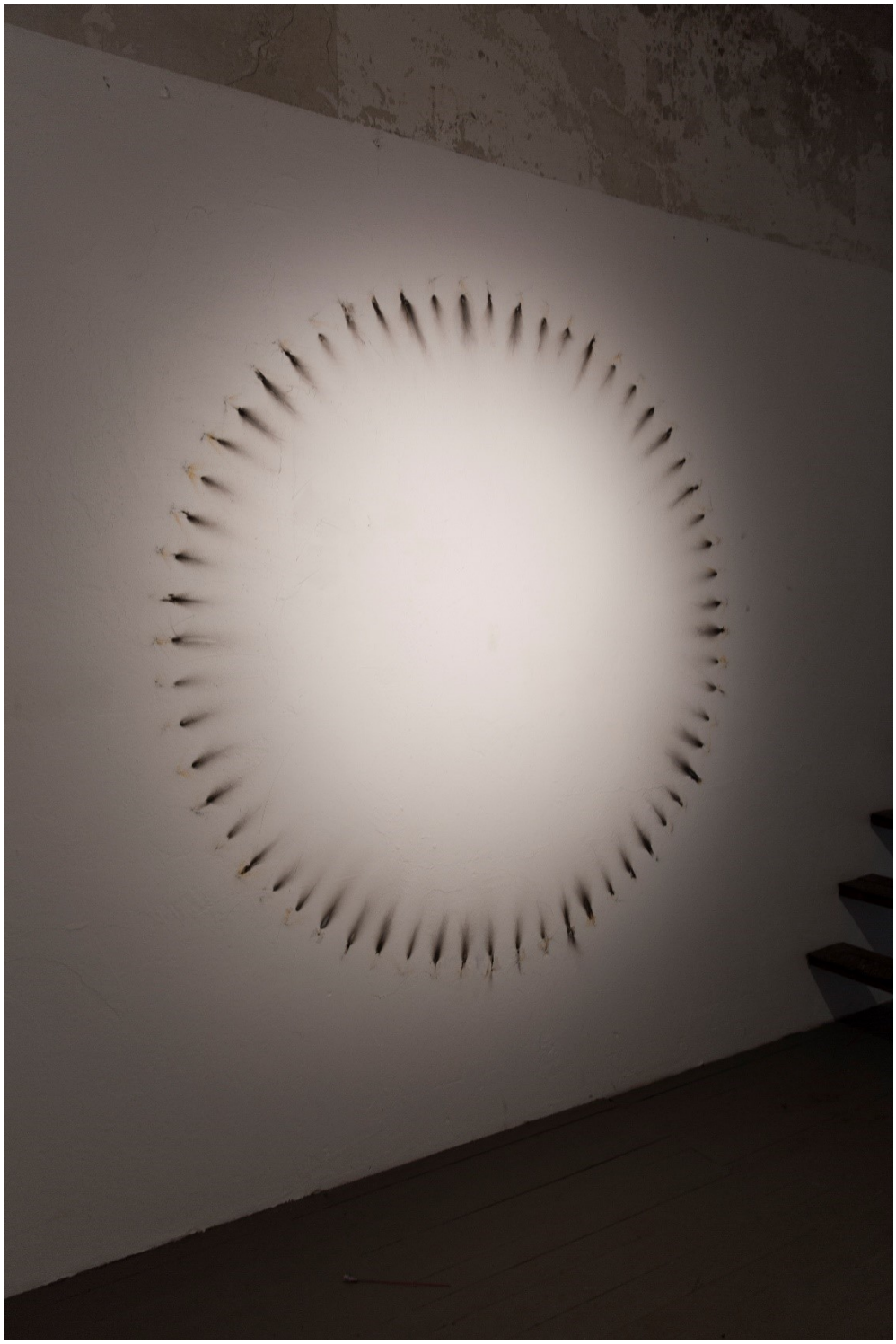
Abstract

This thesis examines the standardized time that underlies temporal practices through the exploration of clocks, schedules and calendars as tools of timekeeping. How and when events are planned follows temporal scripts that are of a specific form. Seeking to disclose the politics of temporal monoculture, that refers to the clock for a singular measure for time, the design of clock-time is questioned through analyzing the purposes it serves. Through exploring the history and development of the clock, the origin of the global timezone system, and the role of the clock in social practice, the aim of this thesis is to shift the notion of time from being an objectifying measure towards being a notion of tempo that is variable and subjectively perceived, thus examining clock-time's own agency.

The face of the archetypal round clock is constructed to display time at the periphery of the circle. At the center, clock-arms are connected to the underlying mechanics that drive clock-time forward. This design is used as a conceptual blueprint for an artistic project of speculation, referred to as *the untimely*. Located at the center of the clock, which is a place irrelevant to our reading of time, *the untimely* works to form a practice of relating to time that suits artistic development, by claiming the right to refuse compliance with temporal scripts (specifically those that dictate capitalist measures). Drawing on theory from various fields, and looking to artworks and examples of visual culture that deal with spatial expression and the embodied sensing of time, a subjective understanding of time is emphasized in forming a temporal practice which is critical towards the uniform measure displayed by the clock. Carried forward by an act of speculative trespass from periphery to center, this thesis is a journey of artistic thinking into underexploited temporal territory, creating a temporal atelier where alternative approaches to time can be developed.

Keywords time, temporal practice, temporal monoculture, center, periphery



Clockwork (Martha Hjorth Jessen 2018) EKKM Tallinn
60 rockets taped to the wall, exploded one by one
diameter: 2m

Preface:

IT'S ABOUT TIME

This project is about time. It is not about what time is as a matter of definition. Nor is it about what time it is and whether we are too early or too late, but about the kind of trouble we get into when we follow an order defined by clocks, schedules and calendars and forget to question the politics of these formats. While being excellent tools of coordination and planning, temporal tools display time in a way that is particular to habits of organization. Participation in a capitalist economic system requires taking on practices that fit into the organizational script and to allow inclusion into the temporal order. If you are often late for work, you lose your job. Should you forget the time and make someone wait for you, they may perceive you as disrespectful and neglectful of a social relation. The messages sent through our attitudes toward time are as plentiful in numbers as the cultures of this world that are defined by national borders, working environments, social ties and/or economic structures as some examples. Each temporal practice is culturally specific and often local in its exertion, demanding that people step into the prevailing script of how and when things are done.

Across the globe, there are many understandings of time. Practices of time vary from country to country, continent to continent and often, the variety in time-practices cause confusion in the weavings of intercultural fabrics where communication, understanding and coordination are culturally predetermined. In some parts of the world, for example in countries of the West and the Global North, planning templates are eagerly applied to management of the time that is considered to be the most important resource. At the center of a matrix that structures economies, communication, transportation, electronic devices, these societies and people's places within them, sits a format of standardized time that anchors the coordination of processes. A central time signal sourced by atomic clocks is distributed worldwide to arrive on wrists, in pockets, at the corners of screens

and on display on the walls of train stations and airport lounges. In neo-liberal economies, one model for time that is tied to the clock is practiced. The clock is the single point of reference to accurate timekeeping. In this temporal monoculture, each member is an expert at referring to the time that is pointed at by the clocks and is familiar with stepping into the architectures of schedules and calendars that frame time as squarely boxed into minutes, hours, days and months. Schedules are perceived as compositions of empty spaces or containers to be filled with life's content (Benjamin). What is poured in these spaces is specific to each individual and each organization as they see fit.

Although time is recognized as a most important resource and a type of medium that sits as a prime condition for our understanding of the limits to our individual lifetime, asking what time is, is a difficult question. It is possible to turn to any discipline of knowledge and ask for their definition of time. The answers may be inspiring and spark much wonder, but they may not be applicable to our social practices.

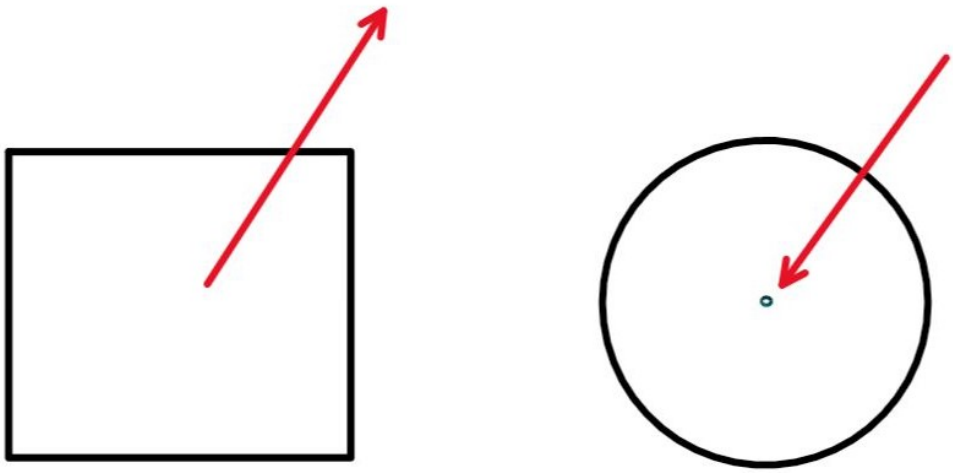
The project I am proposing does not deal with the content of time – it seeks to describe the format and the shape that is used to accommodate temporal practices. Regardless of our backgrounds, adjusting our behavior in time is an exercise of skills that can be acquired and that are mastered by most to some degree. Therefore, this project does not aim to dive into intricate definitions but seeks to deal with the way time is pictured, from the viewpoint that everyone has abilities to both navigate the temporal as well as design the executional management that goes on, understanding the potential of the time that is bracketed in the 24 hours that we call a day.

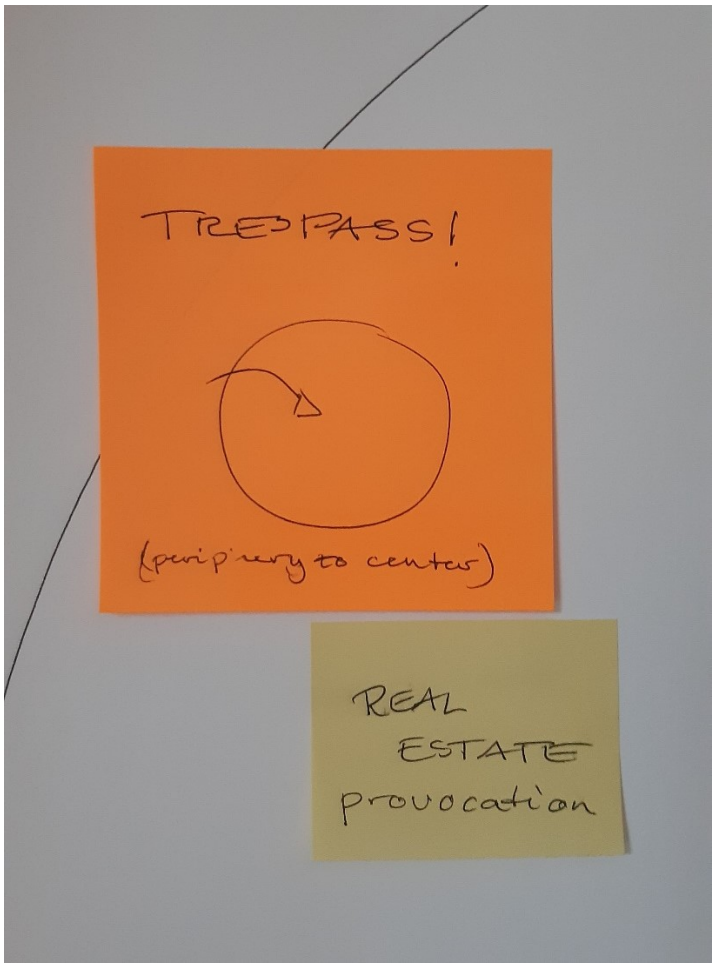
Hannah Arendt quotes author and philosopher Henri Bergson who observed how "if we wish to reflect on time, it is space that responds". In the English language, time is described in terms of space, as if sense of time is made by means of our own movement in relation to it. The model treated and proposed in this thesis takes this statement into account in its most literal form by considering time in spatial terms. More specifically, the round archetype of the clock is taken as the shape of a blueprint which is transposed

through a myriad of scales reaching from the size of clocks to the size of the globe. As a potential floor plan and a conceptual outline, with its measure at the periphery and its source at the center, the layout of the clock is used throughout the project as a site for questioning the politics of a temporal model that organizes events in hierarchies. Insisting on taking time to question the model as well as our own complacency in its structure, we will occupy the surface of the clock to revise its constitution and the possibilities for a process of its redesign. Many exercises in time are common and sit solidly in the use of daily language, but the underlying stories of how time came into its current practice are underdeclared. We know *how* to practice in time, but do we know *how else* to structure the temporal practice to better accommodate the limitation of which is complained when we say we "don't have time" and make a run in the hamster-wheel?

The models used to navigate time show specific temporal moldings which this project aims to frame to examine ways of supplying them with additional designs. Because the clock tells time, it is this shape I have chosen to declare a project that enables entering, by means of speculation and abstract proposal, a space in time that is underexploited yet highly potent in its function. If temporal practices, as we know them, are placed at the periphery of clocks, where time is measured, I invite all readers to join in trespassing the circle and take a tour, guided through art, towards the center of the clock where the movement of time is sourced.

Thinking outside the box is well-rehearsed in the common speech of innovation. Although artists and designers are trained in expeditions outside boxes and eagerly defy all borders that bracket the conventional, in this project I will resist this trope as it brings with it a risk of the marginalization of the speculative agency I propose. Instead of seeking a vision outside the establishment of the box, the journey of this project moves towards the center of the circle, aiming to occupy it as a fertile plateau from where to speculate into other kinds of organization of time that could supply the art practice with productive models.





Illustration(above) and research note(below), Martha Hjorth Jessen 2021

Introduction:

THE UNTIMELY

THE MODEL, THE JOURNEY FROM PERIPHERY TO CENTER AND THE GUIDES THAT TAKE US THERE.

> "How do we occupy the time in which we live? And with whom do we share that time? What does it mean to be on time or to be untimely?
>
> Art is always untimely. Art has no obligation. It can always choose to stay silent, deaf to all appeals for social awareness and critical engagement. Art can seek protection from the purifying fury of earnest concern, by withdrawing from the disordered affairs that torment men and women and the world. It is indeed the right of every artist to strike such a stance of radical refusal, and in the name of artistic and strategic autonomy, resist being goaded into interminable commentary on the state of the world and its inhabitant's miserable circumstances."[1]
>
> (Okwui Enwezor 2016)

In the lecture "All the World's Futures", Okwui Enwezor described how art has no obligation in relation to the contemporary – it has a full right to be *untimely* in the sense that it should not slide into worldly situations to deliver comment and criticism on the state of things, although this state may be of great concern and important to comment on. According to Enwezor, the work of art and the artist should not necessarily reflect on the conditions of the times to produce meaning. The job that art can do is to create safe

[1] transcribed 04'00 and 15'15 https://vimeo.com/showcase/6789340/video/154622195
Okwui Enwezor, *All the World's Futures* (2016)

spaces in which imagination can flourish and to provide fertile ground for reorganization of our conceptions of reality.

Being *untimely* holds the meaning of being *off* in terms of the timing that is dictated by temporal order. The *untimely joke* falls at the wrong moment and causes an inappropriate situation as the fun fails to deliver in context. *An untimely demise* describes the early and unexpected death. Making sense of *the untimely* as a privilege of art brings with it more questions than answers. Personally, I have not arrived at a complete understanding of what it means to be *untimely* in a way that is not awkward, inappropriate or even destructive. However, the *untimely demise*, points towards a kind of event in life where the measure of clocks, management of calendars and keeping of schedules are completely irrelevant. Such life-events, of which there are other examples, take place outside any exact planning, and become incidents that happen through shifts in the world that are completely independent of time that ticks by the clock. These *untimely* events take place in our existence with much gravitas and require reflection as we work to understand our place in the world and in the time we occupy. Whether we are *on time* according to schedules loses its relevance when, suddenly, the *untimely* event causes suspension of clock-time regimes, checking us in to another kind of temporality that lends itself poorly to uniform measure. Within this space, time's measure is of no relevance—in fact, quantifying the duration of *the untimely* seems absurd and far beside the point. To properly experience the quality of *the untimely,* suspension of *the timely* and its objective measure is required. The beating of the clock will not be of help when the important task is to experience what happens when the unexpected and the unplanned cross our paths. These are events that have the potential to profoundly affect one's sense of being and raise questions of how to continue occupying time.

The experience of a work of art—whether it is that of a painting, a sculpture, a performance, or a piece of literature—as well as the production of the work itself are both practices that depend on physical space in which it can be produced and exhibited. But

more importantly, art depends on a temporal space in which it can reside on its own terms. The experience of works of art requires a suspension of the timely obligations that would otherwise draw the viewer's attention towards the time of the clock and away from the intensity of the moment. Furthermore, expanding on the idea of *the untimely* as a quality in art brought forward by Enwezor, we will search for potentials of disregard towards the obligation of being on time. Taking a stance of refusal towards *the timely* finds obvious examples in the acts of being late or being early. These form deconstructive acts of teasing that provoke the order of *the timely* and cause problems to other people's schedules. Undermining the social credibility of one's own temporal reliability in the attempt to become a time-rebel is not the project proposed. Rather, I am proposing the possible construction of a temporal atelier—a place in time where artists, artworks and their audiences may withdraw from strict time regimens to practice modes of sensing and profound subjective image making which are independent of measures of efficiency and profit. As one goes through life, the quality of the content of that life does not need constant quantification. When considering *spending time* from a viewpoint that time is something that can be *had* in the first place, we comply with a culture of time that operates within one model only. This model is anchored in the clock and shall from here onwards be referred to as *temporal monoculture*. Clocks, in temporal monoculture, hold the monopoly on telling time in the measure that is relied on for standards of accuracy that assigns worth to time. Furthermore, the accurate time that is needed to coordinate transactions, electronic devices and meetings between people sits as "linchpin in Western civilization"[2] *The untimely* works to discuss the singular model of timekeeping by clocks, calendars and schedules to which social practices are tied and opens a space for reacting against temporal monoculture to potentialize other possible approaches to time that are less rigid.

[2] Armen Avanessian and Mahan Moalemi (eds), *Ethnofuturismen* 2018 p 3

The opening of space for other approaches to time that I am proposing does not require experimenting with coming late to meetings where timely presence is of importance, as this would obviously marginalize our position in a society that obsesses over time. Becoming fired from jobs in departure from temporal monoculture is not the aim of *the untimely* project—criticizing a culture that is overtly focused on *keeping time* and quantifying life by its measure is. Widening the arena of ways of challenging timekeeping is why I propose pursuing the center of the clock.

The construction of *the untimely* as a place of practice, erected with the help of spatial tools, is intended to form an aesthetics that questions the restrictions of the prevailing temporal order. Its aim is to open the model of clock-time to alternative practices that are less restrictive in their approaches to time. *The untimely* does not build on capitalist slogans such as "time is money"[3] or aphorisms of the kind where time is a resource that can be wasted, rather, it seeks to depart from positions where material currency is put to work as an abstraction of time. *The untimely* is searching for a kind of temporality that resists conforming to blunt efficiencies and profit maximization.

The Model: PERIPHERY AND CENTER

However philosophical the inquiry may be into the approach to time in general, constructing a place for speculation into the designs of *the untimely* requires a framework which builds on careful observation and analysis of the practices that are known in order to produce new imaginaries.

The model of periphery and center is often used to describe social and urban positioning[4]—usually the center being the place of attention and concentration of power,

[3] Origin: *Advice to a Young Tradesman,* Benjamin Franklin, 1748

[4] *All the World's Futures,* Enwezor describes how he had been aiming for a position at the center of contemporary art but while arriving there, had come to realize the importance of relations to the provincial, thus turning his focus away from participating at epicenters of the artworld to forming ties

and the periphery representing the disenfranchised and oppressed. In the case of applying *periphery* and *center* as site-model for *the untimely*, this relationship is reversed. Time is primarily kept at the count of the periphery of the clock. Therefor, the periphery will be dedicated as an environment of stable and reliable practices – it is the place where the arms of the clock point at time in clockwise order to help coordinate tasks in ways that work.

The center, on the other hand, is a place never looked to even though it is the point of onset from where the motion of time is driven. As the point of connection between the clock-arms and the underlying mechanics, the center of the clock face is where the motion of time is sourced. In the project of *the untimely*, the center works as unexplored and underexploited territory to point at with the aim of claiming a space for its practice. The center lends itself as a potential site for speculation into the qualities of "a timeless region, an eternal presence in complete quiet, lying beyond human clocks and calendars altogether… the quiet of the Now in the time-pressed, time-tossed existence of man … this non-time space in the very heart of time"[5] (Hannah Arendt). Although the site chosen for this 'timeless region' sits deeply within the system of the clock, it may be pursued with the quality of *heart* in mind. The measure for time will no longer be the uniform and objective time provided by clocks, but the subjective tempo that is defined by the heart (more on this in chapter "Troubling Times"). Arendt's description of the *non-time space* forms a building-recipe from which to construct an *untimely* zone at the center of time and house a safe space where there is minimal circumference, only rotation. Being far removed from the "conundrum of the storm of progress" (Enwezor after Benjamin) that takes place in clockwise motion at the periphery, through seeking a position deeply within

between worldly art-production that takes place removed from these epicenters. Another example is found in the essay *Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness* (1989) bell hooks treat the politics of location through a feminist lens that considers class, gender and race. The margin is a place where certain groups are hidden from mainstream society. Because that is the place they occupy, the margin is a place from which to operate.

[5] Hannah Arendt quoted in collected form by neurologist Oliver Sacks, *The River of Consciousness* p 34

the clock-model, *the untimely* becomes a part of the model of the clock. To avoid becoming marginalized outside established boxes, as warned against in the preface, the position of the project within reach from all directions and all areas of practice at the periphery, is important in order to be within reach to be able to invite all possible disciplines to the conversation.

The Slow Movement[6] seeks liberation from the clock-time regime through slowing down the pace to counter speed-culture, to meditate and become more mindful of our place in the world. The movement describes departure from quick paced clock-time. This path of departure has a practice of its own that is being exercised to benefit the well-being of many people, but which has also already been established as a supplementary practice, one whose purpose it is to make it bearable to remain seated on office chairs, tied in clock-time. This approach and its balancing practices of meditation, powernaps, mindfulness and office yoga, I will not evaluate.

T*he untimely*, does not aim to discard the time-model and depart from its routines to slow down; rather, it seeks deep arrival within the existing structure to reveal its dispositions[7] to, at some point, turn around and face the periphery from within.

[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slow_movement_(culture)

[7] Easterling: "'dispositions' describes the agency or potential immanent in an arrangement – a property or propensity within a context or relationship. (preface, *Medium Design*, ix)

The clock from within (img Martha Hjorth Jessen 2020) Ravnholm Denmark, office complex

The Guides: HOW TO PURSUE THE CENTER

As guides in this journey that frames the temporal in spatial terms, accompanying the move from periphery to center—from the world that works to the world that does not—I have sought approaches proposed through artworks, architecture, amusement park rides, fictional characters and events in history that favor *the untimely* or seek to rebel against temporal order and the cultural school of time that dictate temporal monoculture. The attitudes described through these examples seek first and foremost to inspire liberation from abusive temporal tropes (such as the hamster-wheel—a well-rehearsed metaphor describing a contraption through which to express participation in a system where work is a duty performed to keep the wheels of society in motion). The hamster-wheel is part of the equipment of the hamster-cage and is designed to activate the hamster to run in place with great speed. Moving ahead in daily life, to the best of our

ability, this image is used to illustrate a conundrum where we appear to arrive nowhere. In a world that speaks of working life in terms of hamster-wheels, in-depth sensing and profound reflection is threatened by speed and lowered perception.

With the motivation of forming possible practices that do not feel oppressive, going further into the circle to arrive at the middle of the very structure that enforces clock-time is somewhat of an absurd plan of liberation. However, freedom may be found through understanding what is perceived as a structure of bondage which ties people to objectified clock-measure. Continuing in the direction of metaphors embodied by animals, and with the aim of examining our investment in rigid clock-time structures, treating the contemporary clock-time system through concepts such as the trap may help find ways of revealing blind participation.

Inspired by Benedict Singleton, I look at traps as designs based on studies of the natural behavior of prey: Placed at strategic spots in the landscape with the right kind of bait, the behavior of the animal is cunningly subverted to serve its own entrapment. “Hunting traps are ‘lethal parodies’ of their prey’s behavior”[8]. If humans are the prey to be caught, we may ask ourselves which traps are set for us – by whom and where - and with which bait we are lured towards them. Examining traps should lead to being able to avoid the subversion of our natures and to outsmarting our own entrapment. Should we already be caught, we should work towards ways of knowing the ideology that has formed the trap-device in order to imagine the process of our escape from its grip.

[8] Benedict Singleton, *Subtle empires: On craft and being crafty* p 258

A history of time:

FROM SUNDIAL TO SMARTWATCH

KEEPING TRACK OF TIME

The awareness of time's passing is a significant part of human existence. Nature and its repetitions have provided the preliminary conditions under which we have subsisted—from dawn till sundown and into the night—all throughout the history of our being. Rooted in time's biological passing, throughout centuries of civilization we have engineered models to visualize time. These enable navigation of activities to form a rhythm in daily life. From the necessity of focusing on how much daylight is available, to navigating time as an entirely synthetic quantifiable system, the idea of time and the social operations within its guidance has become what ties us together in systems of synchronization that offer the blueprint within which behavior and development take place.

In *Groove: An Aesthetic of Measured Time* – Marc Abel works towards identifying the emergence of the temporality of Capitalism through material analysis. Abel argues that when grasping the significance of time and the evolution of its measure, it is important to not only look at the variations of theories and how they were conceived, but also to trace the material circumstances that have produced historical shifts in the experience of time:

> "The material assumption is that certain lived circumstances at particular conjunctions of history and geography are sufficiently generalised to produce a shared experience of time"[9]

Particularly examining the emergence of the development of consciousness of time through material observations, I will start my analysis by "reading" time's passing through phenomenological events of nature, and then move through a history of timekeeping devices, towards an atomic accuracy of measure and a synchronization of clocks that have become *smart* devices and contain practically no loss.

Observing seasonal cycles through sensing light, sky, land and the behavior of our surroundings, humankind has been able to track the moments to gather, feed, sow, hunt and harvest in agrarian structures. The most obvious natural concern for human activities is the passing of the sun over the sky and the clear difference between day and night. In industrialized societies, it has been long since people stopped living only according to sunlight—electrical lighting compensates for poor night sight in most urban communities of the world where accurate timekeeping is of importance. The time-system under which we operate is a synthetic approximation which divides the time of day into 24 predictable and reliable durations. The designs for measuring a day have progressed from using a shadow on the ground, to a bowl filling slowly, candles burning, a bell struck by monks, to clock-based designs which use escapement mechanisms, springs, quartz crystals and oscillations within a Caesium 133 atom. Time, which we cannot see, has its own material history spanning a large arch of development in human engineering. Deeply ingrained in temporal monoculture behavior, time's measure is applied to the every-day by referring to the clocks that show it.

Backtracking the ontology of our perceived reality, the factors ruling the organizational rhythm of life were determined by the sun, the moon and the stars. The sun determined

[9] Marc Abel p 187

our activities by providing the light necessary to see what had to be done and to avoid dangers lurking. The lunar cycle could be observed by the changing crescent of the moon and the curve it took traveling over the horizon. Beyond the scale offered by day, the moon provided a larger temporal cycle of a month (to which the moon lends its name). The monthly calendar would be called out (*calare*, Latin) by priests from the Capitol in Rome, announcing the beginning of the month by the vision of a new moon[10]. Reading the lunar cycle and deriving from it a timekeeping, was centralized in the hands of authorities, which is where much of time's measure has remained throughout history.

The connection between the moon, the water at the shore, and the rising height of rivers predicted the success of a coming harvest by measuring the water level of the Nile during flood season as water flowed into the Nilometer, a shaft dug into the ground.[11] Time in its various historical measures, elicits its importance as the rhythm to which societal structures can be orchestrated. Agrarian economy roots itself in seasonal cycles, determining the correct action to take in relation to the passing of natural events. For the agricultural population, a constructed measure providing accuracy of time has been of no use to the management of crops and cattle. Referring to a quantifying time-device will not equip a population that farms its land to sustain themselves and their families. Careful observation of nature's cycles will have further provided times for beneficial rituals to be carried out. There are speculations that Stonehenge's structure framed different positions of the sun's passage through its arches as an indicator of the proper time to carry out seasonal rituals.

There was little reason to shape human activities according to a quantifiable time measure as precise as a clock when the objective of agricultural societies was the necessity of feeding people. The agrarian societies did not stimulate excessive productivity nor enormous appetites. The important time to measure concerned material

[10] https://www.etymonline.com/word/calendar
[11] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nilometer

immediacies such as food and shelter in relation to survival and the completion of the concrete tasks required to uphold sustenance, "not a predetermined clock(time) measure to be subsequently filled with activity"[12].

An exactitude of time came with the growth of the religions. Praying simultaneously and in larger groups increased the potency of prayer (Abel). In Christianity, the church was not only in charge of spirituality in society, but also held systems for taxation and the accumulation of material wealth:

> "The bells, in short, were drivers - goads to effective, productive labor. It is this larger role, going far beyond reveille, that may account for the higher standard of punctuality enforced by the new monastic orders of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Cistercians in particular were as much an economic as a spiritual enterprise."[13]

With the call to prayer at fixed times, a collective schematization was instated to incite punctuality. It served a purpose for the bell to be heard sounding over the fields, thus the bells grew bigger and the architecture enveloping them became towers, many of which gained mechanical clocks later on. A pre-runner to the model of the Industrial collection of the workforce in Western Europe was first trained through the call to prayer.

With my interest in measuring time, specifically with the aim of tracking the legacies leading to our operation of it today, the measure of time within the day is of specific importance. The year, the month, the week, and the day can all be defined according to natural events by counting sunsets and the shape of the moon. It took some 400 years to develop and adjust the format of the calendar to keep in line with natural events such as the equinoxes. The smaller divisions of the day—the hours, the minutes and the seconds—are defined and derived from, yet do not follow, the natural rhythm of the day

[12] Abel quotes Landes (who wrote Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World) *Groove: An Aesthetic of Measured Time* p 188
[13] Abel p 189 quoting Landes 1983 p 68

which was previously bracketed by a sunrise and a sunset. To keep track of units of time within the day, structures have been engineered to mark time's passing and to predict the remaining time for activity. Arriving at the devices that are in use today, the thought of clocks as rulers for time and behavior resonates in current times where we partake in an economic system that envelops the entire planet in capitalism, a system which runs on metrics that are often temporal. To this I will return, let us first examine the development of time as measure, starting with the frame of the single day.

24 hours: TIME AS MEASURE

Western methods of time tracking have their roots in Ancient Egypt, starting with the shadow stick that predates the sundial. Placed on the ground, a construction of a horizontal stick, kept above the ground by a vertical support, cast a shadow on the ground. Judging by the length of this shadow, it could be seen how much of the day remained.

With the sundial, another means to track time by shadow, developed around 700BC, a gnomon (a vertical stick) showed the journey of the sun over the sky by the end of the stick's shadow, marking places on a dial which displayed the span of day. Obviously, nights could not be measured this way, but the dial enabled an overview of available daylight time and the time-position within it. The shade on the dial emerged at sunrise and traveled clockwise, passing noon as a short shadow and moving through the rest of the day growing longer in a sweeping curve to then disappear at sundown. Daylight in Ancient Egypt was divided into ten parts plus two twilight parts—one at the beginning and one at the end of a day. Twelve was a convenient number as the mathematics could be worked out on the fingers of the hand—each finger has 3 joints at which the thumb can point. Ascending the count finger by finger, one will eventually arrive at a sum of 12 on each

hand. The Sumerian counting system, favoring 12, laid the base for measuring time and has not been exchanged with the system of 10 (fingers) otherwise favored by the Romans.

The first sign of a synthetic time, made to be calculated according to measures given even weight, was recorded when Greek astronomers divided the day into 24 equal hours. Around 400 BC, time became tangible in a new way independent of the movement of the sun and began to be measured according to equal units. Night hours had been measured from around 980 BC using marked candles, some of which even had an alarm function using a metal pin inserted into the side of the candle. When the flame burned to this point of the candle, melting the wax that held the pin, it would fall into a tray and make a sound. Examples of incense sticks with bells attached to them served a similar function. These predate the *clepsydra*, or water-clock, that would show time as a bowl slowly filling with water. Marks on the insides of the bowl showed the progress of time with a measure independent of daylight.[14]

Taking a historical leap to Renaissance, a key scientific moment leading to the construction of mechanical clocks took place during mass in the cathedral of Pisa as a young science student, Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), observed a phenomenon later to be named *isochronism*. While observing the swinging of incense lamps used at mass, he noticed how a big and a small lamp would swing at the same speed. Galilei's discovery that the duration of the arch of a swinging pendulum is independent of the length of that arch is said to have been measured against his own pulse. Galilei developed his idea and shared it in a letter to a friend, Santorio, a physician in Venice. The measure of the pulse of patients was to then become measured by using a handheld pendulum.[15]

[14] Dr Donna Carroll, *A Brief History of Calendars and Timekeeping*
[15] http://galileo.rice.edu/sci/instruments/pendulum.html

Mobile Timekeeping: MECHANICAL CLOCKS

The first mechanical clocks with dials and arms are dated to Europe in the 1300's. They displayed not 12, but 24 equal hours on a round dial with a hand in the middle. Run mechanically and driven by the controlled drop of weights, the system was further specified according to a Sumerian division of 60 minutes.

Taking another leap in history to arrive at a time of growth for the European colonial trade-empires, transportation around the globe evolved explosively at the end of the 1400's, coinciding with when Columbus hit the shore of the Americas and sparked the colonial expansion of European territories. At the beginning of the 1700's, with the increase of globalization across the seas, ships bore slaves to the new world along with material goods and commodities to the colonizing nations. With the ships came the development of maps and navigation tools. The compass was not new to the era and neither was navigation by the stars by measuring their distance above the horizon. These measures determined the directions in which to travel but not the distance. In 1707, naval disasters claimed two-thousand British lives, leading the Parliament to offer a reward for the improvement of the safety of navigation at sea.[16] As the inaccuracy of navigation according to the directional method provided by stars and a compass would amplify over distance and would furthermore give no indication of when to avoid dangerous waters, many ships entered dire straits because of deviations from the intended course.

With the addition of clocks to maritime navigation, East-West distance could be measured according to the difference in time between the point of departure and the time of the current place at sea. In the early history of *chronometrics* (the system of time used to measure distance at sea) the use of pendulum clocks for navigation was abolished, as the tipping of a ship at sea would make it impossible to keep the clocks running. Clocks run by a spring wound to provide kinetic energy for the mechanics were developed to serve

[16] Dr Donna Carrol,l *A Brief History of Calendars and Timekeeping*

the purpose of transportation at sea, as they would run independently of the movement of the waves. Pendulum clocks remained immobile at land where they remained to show time.

From the 1800's onwards, time started to gain global measure as railroads connected points over large distances and the coordination of trains became necessary (more on this later, chapter *Time Geography*). Before transportation by railway, movement would take place by carriage or by walking, which is both of smaller scale and a lower speed. Time was only needed as an estimate, as much could happen on the way. Journeys could take days and the exact measure of time was not helpful in terms of timely arrival at the destination.

Industrialization brought an explosion in scale to the reach of activities. Labor bound to machines and specific processes required management that anchored factory output to timekeeping. Clocks and their timing were as significant to production as the engines driving the machines. With the engine and the clock, the practice of work changed from small scale manufacturing to large-scale productivity and the development of capitalist monopolies. To time during these cradling years of capitalism, we shall return.

From a position on the ground as shadow, gaining the sound of a bell, traveling to high points of reference on towers and churches, to pendulum clocks, into the chronometers used at sea, clocks had become portable to the individual. With technological progress that allowed refined mechanics to shrink in size, clocks became watches at the end of chains, inserted into gentlemen's vests specifically tailored for the purpose of pocketing the watch. Before the First World War, only women wore watches at the wrist as pieces of fine jewelry. However, as warfare technology changed and synchronization of missions and timing of explosions were required, pocket watches proved insufficient to the task. Time had to be easily displayed and having both hands free was favorable to the activity of warfare. Soldiers needed both their hands in war and thus, pocket-watches became attached to leather bands to be strapped to the wrist. After the war, wristwatches

became socially acceptable as men's fashion and designs slimmed and flattened the mechanics of clockworks to fit this new position.

Another effect on the clock and its timekeeping which is historically rooted in World War One was the popularization of daylight-saving time. To shift fuel consumption from artificial lighting and use it instead for warfare, in 1916 a decision was made to shift the clock by one hour between Summer and Winter[17].

The first quartz clocks were introduced in 1928. Quartz-crystals oscillate a fixed number of times per second when subjected to an electrical current from a battery. This added further accuracy to clockworks that made them uniform in relation to each other. One quartz clock runs on the same number of oscillations as any other quartz clock. Eliminating pendulums and springs that were to be wound up, the material properties of the crystal formed a standard for time by its reliable ability to oscillate at 600 Hz. By the 1970's the quartz clock gained traction in the market and by 1997, 97% of watches and clocks produced contained quartz-crystal oscillators[18].

Performance: COMPANION CLOCKWORKS

The watch was to gain physical resilience in crucial ways that show its linkage to physical performance and human achievement: long-distance swimming required waterproof casings and deep dives demanded the casing to withstand high atmospheric pressure. The watch was the timer that showed speed and the achievement of goals within the sports-genres where performance is bracketed within a timeframe. The performance of getting the farthest the fastest set the goals related to physical endurance. In 1926, the first waterproof watch, the Rolex Oyster, was worn by a female swimmer aiming to cross the

[17] https://www.timeanddate.com/time/dst/history.html
[18] https://www.hodinkee.com/articles/apple-watch-series-3-edition-review

English Channel. She did not make it all the way, but the watch kept ticking and was unaffected by the conditions of the sea. Decades later, in 2019 at the world's first manned expedition to the deepest point of the five oceans, the Omega Ultra Deep Professional accompanied the first human to have reached both the highest and the lowest points on the planet. Strapped to the diving vessel, the clock journeyed to the deeps of the earth under the harshest conditions. No longer intended to only accompany everyday humans in their daily activities, these watches became technological pinnacles that accompanied people on journeys into space (the Omega Speedmaster was worn by the first astronaut to walk the moon in 1969).

Following the evolution of technology leading up to the watches of today, the invention of micro-processors enabled the first digital watch to be released in 1972. The face of the clock changed from a round dial with arms to a digital interface with digits of blocky eights, separated by colons. At first the different lines were to be filled by light showing time purely as numbers, but with the development of LCD technology, liquid crystals that changed color when subjected to an electrical current, time could be displayed on screens. Furthermore, in borrowing its interface from the calculator, the first merging of functionality of electronic devices emerged on the consumer market. The calculator watches from the late 1970's opened the arena for the combination of functionality that was to dominate the development of all portable electronic devices. With the ability to store small data and memos, and a monochrome LCD screen, watches became devices that could be connected to PCs with a cable.[19]

When the mobile phone gained traction of consumers and global connectivity took a wireless form, watches continued to expand in functionality with the absorption of GPS technology. Global Positioning System navigators (GPS) where initially separate devices that would pinpoint location according to signals from mobile phone antennas and satellites. As mobile phones became pocket sized, wearing wristwatches became

[19] https://www.productevolution.org/2017/12/smartwatch-evolution/

optional. Time slid back into pockets, to be displayed on screens. Rapidly developing technology replaced the bulky mechanics of buttons with the touch of screens. When the first phone watch emerged in 1999, the functions of both watches and phones merged into a form that is recognized today, in 2021. With the further addition of operating systems and apps, the watch was no longer solely a timepiece, but became a computer worn at the wrist servicing the full integration of connectivity that has come to characterize our times.

The first smartwatch to be released in 1998 (Pebble) was partly crowd-funded – a new form of financing that enabled direct building of products by consumer preference. Evolving through the next two decades, increasing functionality and connectivity with third party applications was to become dominant, offering tools of management and communication through a connection to the mobile phone. GPS technology stayed an integral part, allowing the watch to be a tracking-assistant of personal activity and route. Furthermore, the place on the wrist in combination with sensors on the back of the watch allowed for an immediate type of monitoring of physical functions.

Furthermore, the human pulse against which Galilei measured the swinging pendulum in the 1600's at the initial observation that sparked the development of mechanical clocks, has become absorbed into the smartwatches of today as their sensors enable wearers to keep track of their heartrate through sensors.

Time Geography:

TEMPORAL INFRASTRUCTURE

TIME-ZONES AND THE NORTH POLE AS CENTER POINT OF THE EARTH

At the 1884 International Meridian Conference in Washington, DC, initiated by the American president, an important element of what was to become a globe-enveloping piece of design was introduced. Delegates from twenty-six countries, mainly of the global West and South-West, decided to center time as a layer on top of the world map, forming a temporal geographic superstructure. Fixing its starting point in the middle of the Mercator Projection[20] in Greenwich, UK, at the prime longitude meridian, a standard time reference point of *zero* was placed to define Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). This did not yet form the system of timezones, as revolving across the globe with plus hours towards the East and minus hours towards the West. GMT time was distributed by telegraph via transatlantic cable from Greenwich to be read for ships to adjust their chronometers by time-balls mounted on towers visible from sea.

A year prior to the 1884 Meridian Conference, North American railroad companies congregated to solve the problem posed by coordinating transcontinental transportation by train across hundreds of local time zones. It is not hard to imagine the chaos brought about by this situation in a country that grew its economy at a rapid pace on the tracks of these trains. Private railroad companies decided on a standard of their own, Standard Railway Time, that collected time around 5 longitudinal zones. This simplified the coordination of infrastructure a great deal. A point worth highlighting here is that the first

[20] The world map developed by Flemish geographer and cartographer Gerardus Mercator in 1569

attempt at streamlining the system of time zones was developed by corporate railway companies, not by national political bodies or through international cooperation.

When the system of using GMT as a global reference point, including regional time offsets—measured in *plus* or *minus* hours—was distributed over the globe, form was given to a universal temporal operating system. In this system, time and its signal sits as a basal element of code in the coordination of movement of people, goods and transactions.

Currently, time is fixed in a standard code, *ISO 8601: T[hh][mm][ss],* which can be found with the International Organization for Standards in Geneva, Switzerland. Under slogans such as "when things don't work as they should, it often means standards are absent", the ISO institution forms global standards as keys that slide into the processes of the world, making uniform what would otherwise be variable.

INFRASTRUCTURE SPACE

> The shared standards and ideas that control everything from technical objects to management styles also constitute an infrastructure. Far from hidden, infrastructure is now the overt point of contact and access between us all – the rules governing the space of everyday life[21]

Easterling's concept of *extrastatecraft* describes infrastructure space that extends beyond Westphalian nation borders and gives form to global systems that serve purposes other than keeping nations politically separate. The system of zoning time over geographies was crafted: initially designed by North American railroad companies, it was later adapted as a model for the entire planet. Although it took many years to distribute

[21] Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft – the Power of Infrastructure Space* (Introduction)

the system of timezones across the world, the system has become the ruling tool for inter- and internal national coordination.

Physical networks that facilitate transportation, communication and distribution are traditionally perceived as infrastructure. Easterling points at the culturally recognized *zone* as another spatial element lending functional form to infrastructure space. Examples of these are zones of free-trade, areas of access to wireless networks, and shopping malls with buying options clustered together into commodity-zones. With the decision to anchor global timekeeping in Greenwich, and the standardization of time following the longitudes of the world map, perhaps the first global piece of *extrastatecraft* was imposed on the world as temporal superstructure.

Infrastructure, in Easterling's terms, is furthermore described as a *hidden substrate* and a *binding medium* that has *active form*, not object form. If clock-time is to be treated as a key element in the code that underlies this active form, it may also be connected to an examination of the political chemistries which the temporal, timezones and GMT slide into:

> An important diagnostic in the fluid politics of extrastatecraft, disposition uncovers accidental, covert, or stubborn forms of power – political chemistries and temperaments of aggression, submission or violence – hiding in the folds of infrastructure space.[22]

As already mentioned, GMT is a standard which was formed during the first wave of Western Industrialization. Decided upon by mainly Western and South-Western countries and effectively placed on imperialist territory in Greenwich, the zoning system forms a type of international government for the coordination of worldwide transportation, which was suitable to serve the powers of those times. With this structure, globalization

[22] Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft – the Power of Infrastructure Space* p73

stretched its reach to every part of the globe, and along with it, capitalism gained its global potential.

With capitalist incentive—and the business of transporting goods produced during the first wave of Industrialization in increasing quantities—came the concentration of labor around factories. In the wake of migrating workforces supplying factories with laborers, came the construction of suburbs and the emergence of the daily commute for both blue- and white-collar workers employed in the schedules of accelerating production. Transportation zones in cities as well as suburbs, which are zones of their own, became important infrastructure for the commute taking people to town. Around each connecting point of the transportation network of roads and public transport, enclaves of housing sprouted within convenient reach to these veins of transportation. With the distribution of the internet across countries, laid out in wire networks with points from which to plug in and become connected, another type of immaterial environment was soon to develop with wireless zones as its extensions.

AT THE STILL POINT OF A TURNING WORLD[23]

The zone structure I will focus on now lies within the concepts constructed around the Greenwich Meridian and global time-zones. On top of the geography of the world, this specific time geometry divides the ball of our planet into 24 slivers.

Examining the sheer geometry of this design, two points on the planet have a specific character that is different from anywhere else. At the Arctic and Antarctic poles, the longitudinal lines of the world map intersect. At this meeting point of longitudes, the lines defining time-zones collide on icecaps in an environment where days turn into

[23] Line from the poem *Burnt Norton* by TS Elliot 1938

consecutive periods of light at the height of summer and become permanent night during winter.

In the time-lapse video work "*Nummer Negen, the day I didn't turn with the world*" (Guido van der Werve, 2007), recorded at the geographic North Pole, the artist stands dressed in black in the middle of the image. As the sun moves across the sky, the black figure rotates in the opposite direction. The earth turns clockwise and van der Werve turns counterclockwise during the 24 hours that comprise the timeline of the work. His action can be seen to comment on a radical wish to stand still in a world that turns, as put forward by social movements that wish to slow down the pace of the world. At a scale of physics and planetary bodies, by turning counterclockwise, van der Werve resists moving with the rotation of the planet. By his slow turning, the earth rotates under his feet while he, himself, stays immobile and appears to counter the progress of the day. With this temporal balancing act, at this particular place in the world, our perception of the world transforms it conceptually into one planetary object with a rotation that can be countered. Anywhere else on the planet, it is impossible to avoid the turning motion as we will always be subjected to some earthly scale of rotation.

"Nummer negen – the day I didn't turn with the world" Guido van der Werve 2007

Taking the shape into account, the clock can be seen as a 2-dimensional blueprint of the Earth. This observation underlies the project of this thesis, defining the place for the *untimely* practice. Inspired by van der Werve's work, I arrived at questioning the properties of the center of the clock according to the physical potential demonstrated by van der Werve at the North Pole. By countering the earth's rotation, he manages to hack clock-time which, anywhere else, is defined by that very rotation. Through this work, a central axis can be defined as both a geographical collecting point of time-zones and a conceptual epicenter for the temporal.

A CENTER ZONE

> [Zone variants] mutate on the ground, oscillating between visibility and invisibility, identity and anonymity … For all its efforts to be apolitical, the zone offers a powerful political pawn. While extolled as an instrument of economic liberalism, it trades state bureaucracy for even more complex layers of extrastate governance, market manipulation, and regulation.[24]

Perhaps more useful than the concept of *site* to the center project is the concept of the *zone*. Site is tied to geography in a manner that treats a piece of land as property. Zones are of a different immaterial potentiality that overlays material real-estate property. The time at the periphery of the clock, which is where the measure is, is of use to capitalist econometrics. The center shows no numbers and is simply the place where the movement of the arms of the minute and the hour originates. It may be functionally important, but in the case of forming a conceptual blueprint derived from the circular clock, the center lends itself poorly to capitalization and could, as a concept, stand outside the notion of

[24] Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft – the Power of Infrastructure Space* p 26-27

property that is fixed to ground. Zones are mobile and can be anchored anywhere as consequence of their immateriality.

TIK TAK

At the famous amusement park Tivoli in Copenhagen sits a ride named TIK TAK. Visitors walk onto a round floor, under the huge face of a clock, to enter little carts. When the ride begins, the floor disc starts rotating at increasing speeds around its middle axis. The carts, mounted in sets of three, spin around an additional central axis, as well as each cart being able to turn individually. The arms of the clock that hangs above rotate with calm but increasing speed during the ride. In this motion of triple spinning, visitors are whirled rapidly through a time that speeds ahead in mechanical fashion. With references to retro clock designs, the ride could resemble a friendly time machine—there are however no other references leading visitors to think they could be spun either forwards or backwards in time. As places of leisure, staged as parallel worlds intended to increase amusement and tickle our senses, often topped with sugar rushes from candy stalls, amusement parks offer amplified versions of phenomena recognized from daily life. Dressed in bright lights and colored decors, the park holds an amusement agency that offers contemporary experiences as amusement park rides. Perhaps TIK TAK could be seen to represent a perception of time in daily life and a sense of being spun around, strapped into a machine of time with no option to exit before the ride slows down and comes to a standstill? Within the ride, a functional place at the center serves the purpose of holding bags and coats in compartments. This is the place of the smallest rotational speed. The further away from the center one is removed, the greater the reign of centrifugal power. This observation is used to set the site for *the untimely* as I seek the place of the smallest movement of rotation.

(TIK TAK Img Martha Hjorth Jessen 2020)

"Nummer negen – the day I didn't turn with the world" Guido van der Werve 2007

Tools:

THE CLOCK AS TIMEKEEPER

TOOLS AND THEIR MASTERS

To construct, craft and alter designs, tools are needed. For the process of materializing designs, tools are developed as extensions that can be used in performing work according to instructions of the maker (ET Hall and Richard Sennett). Clocks, which carry and signify the time needed for coordination, are in and of themselves tools to be referred to and to be used to guide actions. More specifically, clocks are of paramount importance to economic measures of profit and efficiency in working life. Marc Abel calls time in capitalism the "ever-present, totalizing constant, imposing its law on all productive activity"[25]. Timekeeping is particular to capitalism in the way that it sits at the core of capitalism's metrics.

Analyzing the construction and function of clocks as the tools or extensions that define the timely—making sure meetings happen on time, not too early, not too late— a stance is sought to oppose this timeliness, testing timeliness itself as a form for critical practice within *the untimely*. Looking to feminism and identity studies for a viewpoint that is critical of the use of established tools to reveal counter-politics, the following pinnacle statement may prove useful:

> "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house"
>
> (Audre Lorde, 1984)

[25] Marc Abel *Groove: An Aesthetic of Measured Time* p 199

Clocks are tools that help keep time and master the timely, but to such an extent that we may ask: who is the ruler in the relationship, the object or the user? Audre Lorde exclaims that dismantling any construct in which masters keep slaves, requires development of tools that are different from those with which the confining structure - *the master's house* - has been built. This, however, brings with it the huge job of discarding the tools of the masters while also inventing new ones and would, furthermore, be an approach of thinking and designing "outside of the box", which is not the strategy I propose. If the way to arrive at *the untimely* is by moving to the center, the place that functionally drives the mechanical motion of the clock, turning to Karen Barad's follow-up reference to Audre Lorde's iconic statement can prevent resignation from existing structures, but focus on repurposing their functions:

> "But tools are never entirely faithful to their masters."
> (Karen Barad, 2017)

Instead of venturing out of the box, looking for processes in which clocks are unfaithful to the capitalist project could show potentials of repurposing their designs. In looking for ways of circumventing meeting calendars, efficiencies and time-metrics, tools can be hacked and repurposed to fit other agendas. Examining the archetypal mechanics of the clock, atop the petite machine sits a round face with arms rotating around the clock to point at the time. The arms are connected to the middle axle of the clock and follow the motion dictated by the engine. Altering the idea of those arms to form a tool that is slightly different in function, actively twisting what it grips rather than being twisted by an engine, conceptually, the direction of the tool is reversed. Comparable to the wrench or the ratchet, which are both intended to tighten or loosen nuts onto bolts, we can speculate into the idea of tampering with the mechanism by turning the clock-arm like a

wrench in such a way that the clock is deconstructed into its various parts, literally dismembering the clock of its arms.

The *untimely* then, starts to work within the labor method of the clockmakers who possess the skills to build, fix or dismantle clocks. Clockmakers are the masters of clocks, equipped with a magnifying lens and skilled to work with tiny mechanics and tiny tools. In *The Craftsman,* Sociologist Richard Sennett's book on the spirit of craftsmanship ethos and the process of craft, the relationship between artisan and machine is described in the following animate terms:

> In the economic history of skilled human labor, machinery that began as a friend has often ended up as an enemy. Weavers, bakers, and steelworkers have all embraced tools that eventually turned against them … Sound judgment about machinery is required in any good craft practice. Getting things right – be it functional or mechanical perfection – is not an option to choose if it does not enlighten us about ourselves.[26]

The first part of this quote describes industrialization seeking to increase modes of production by replacing manual labor with machines. Although this refers to the labor-executing machinery of workshops, clocks can be considered in much the same way, as they facilitated the change away from natural time: mechanical time, uniform and synthesized to guide working days, replaced an orientation to changing daylight with days of even measure. Sennett analyzes an approach to machines the following way:

> The enlightened way to use a machine is to judge its powers, fashion its uses, in light of our own limits rather than the machine's potential. We should not compete against the machine. A machine, like any model, ought to propose rather than command, and humankind should certainly walk away from command to

[26] Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* p 81 and p 106

> imitate perfection. Against the claim of perfection we can assert our own individuality, which gives distinctive character to the work we do.[27]

With Sennett's address in mind, we should be able to release any tightness of grip in our relationship to clocks and their timeliness, opening the approach to a reconsideration of the influence of the temporal on the individual and to subjective experiences of time that the clock does not otherwise accommodate. Achieving the distinctive character that I would argue is required in any artist's work, requires challenging the commands imposed through social narratives about the use and purpose of time. Being alert to signs of power relations in any structure carrying the characteristics of *master* and *slave* should always function to relieve oppression and claim space for expression.

Catching up on Enwezor; it is not the duty of the artist to comply and be goaded into the obligations of the times to deliver comments on the order of the world.[28] Capitalist societies disfavor—but romanticize—inefficient practices that do not lend themselves to profit. Mental activities that do not lead to the creation of a product are often subjected to justification according to narratives of production. *Failure* is an important trope within any story of success if the person or the organization manages to harness their failure to create success. However, the story of failure needs telling in the light of that success, otherwise the merits are not justified. Claiming the right to talk about failure*,* without shing upon it the light of success, is an example of exercising the practice of *the untimely* by not letting failure become a tool for success.

Arendt reminds us:

> I have said before that mental activities, and especially the act of thinking is always 'out of order' when seen from the perspective of the unbroken continuity of our business in the world of appearances.[29]

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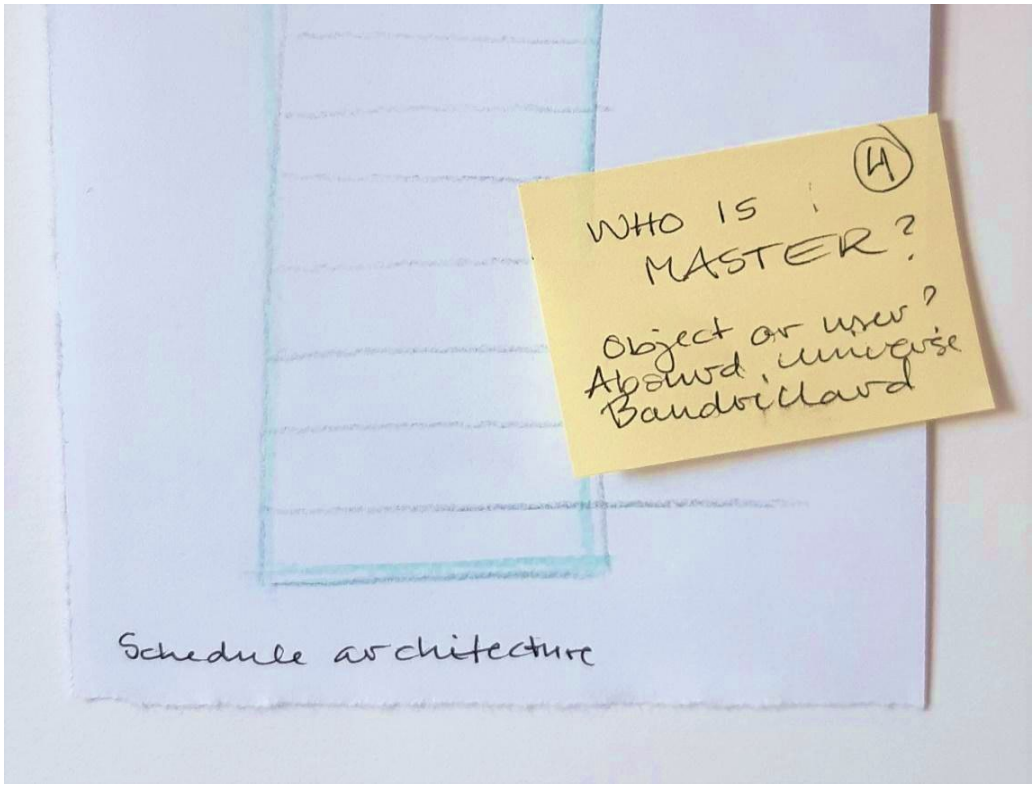
[27] Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* p 105
[28] Enwezor, *All the World's Futures*
[29] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind – Thinking* p 13

Craftsmen can subtly destroy machines by knowing their weakest mechanical points, while also having the ability to repair these same machines or to rebuild them into new versions. Through defining clocks as industrial machines, could the tool that is the clock be repurposed to carve out an *untimely* practice? Through transforming the face of the clock to a site for speculation on repurposing the use of our time, *the untimely* insists on the right of refusing capitalist metrics in the 'name of artistic and strategic autonomy' (Enwezor, quoted in the Introduction) with conceptual tools that carve out a *timeless region* of which Arendt speaks when she places the *heart of time* beyond existing time structures. The *untimely* seeks to define this place by pursuing the center of the clock, equipped with tools that are not 'entirely faithful to their masters' (Barad).



Research note (Martha Hjorth Jessen 2021)

Object Analysis:

THE AGENCY OF CLOCKS

ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY AND THINGS AS PARTICIPANTS

> … are objects not, in the end, co-producers [of society]?[30] (Bruno Latour)
>
> Things are actants that induce action from humans. Both reciprocally format each other[31] (Keller Easterling)

Placed in our environment at positions of visibility and strapped to our wrists, clocks are available to show time when looked at. On the devices in our pockets, we carry around a compass of time that helps navigate the temporal environment to *be on time*. Clocks can be seen as passenger objects in our daily commotion, or even parasites on our plans as the content of life is put into order. I wish to examine the object that is the clock according to a pattern of active participation, to avoid treating them as passive objects that are carried around. Clocks and the time they tell have agency, a position I outline below. As tools of timekeeping, they influence our behavior, perhaps to such an extent that it is worth discussing who is the master of whom in the relationship, as humans chase ahead to be on time.

Objects, in philosopher, anthropologist and sociologist Bruno Latour's conception, are more than things. They are simultaneously real, discursive and social[32]. In this theoretical approach, objects do not work by themselves, but exercise their function within the networks they form with their users. Objects are involved in social relationships as

[30] Bruno Latour, *We have never been Modern* p 54
[31] Keller Easterling, *Medium Design – How to Work on the World* p 34
[32] Bruno Latour, *We have never been Modern* p 65

participants possessing agency with which they influence the outcome of social processes. Actor-Network Theory (Latour et al, from here onwards referred to as ANT) offers an analytical strategy which focuses on revealing the politics by which these objects are formed and the effect they have on the web of relations between humans and non-humans that compose the social world.

When discussing this in relation to the system of timezones at a planetary scale, or the clocks that sit at the more intimate end of the impact on humans, we arrive in a critical framework dealing with all elements in the social and the natural world existing in relationships that form ecologies. Objects, ideas, systems, processes and humans are interrelated concepts in the creation of social situations. Non-human elements, such as objects or zones, analyzed within the framework of ANT, can never be neutral as they will always carry in them potentials that influence use and purpose through their designs.

Referring to clocks influences our idea of time. With an orientation towards the quantification of actions, being accurate and aware of how time is spent, we look to this piece of animate technology to guide us forward. The motion of progress and the notion of a day's passing permeates our behavior to such an extent that referring to the clock is more usual than not. If the purpose of my inquiry is to define *untimely* practice, the times that we may consider not referring to the clock is a suggested productive action of refusal.

At the onset of my research into the (un)timely, I sought information to answer *what* time is. This venture brought me far into the natural sciences. Newtonian physics and the laws of thermodynamics have explanations to a time that is perceived as linear and irreversible. Einstein's theories of relativity and the models of quantum mechanics show a time that is warped in space extending far beyond the clock which is used for measure. Although within the practical examples of relativity and the mechanics of the quantum beautiful models are observed that help to see time otherwise, unpacking these theories presents a task that would require a separate thesis to do them justice.

When approaching temporal models with the view to navigate them from a social perspective, utilizing ANT as an analytical framework, practicing in time is socially constituted behavior, enforced to coordinate people in relation to events. Temporal models, such as clocks, calendars and schedules, are the tools that help keep track of this coordination. The purpose of these formats works far beyond physical objecthood as their designs influence the way processes are visualized. For example, the layout of a schedule offers a grid of empty containers in which durations of an hour, half hour or a quarter are assigned a square form of a certain size. Schedules and other temporal templates are social in their way of providing us with an image, or a design, for time that anchors our behavior in cultural schools of time that cultivate consistent temporal behavior.

Whether strapped to our wrists, at the corners of screens or on the walls in train stations, the object that is the clock is tangible. Designed as a tool and a point of reference, like the compass, clocks feed us with the idea that time is rotational, ever progressing, steady in its pace and part of an object-human ecology where we rely on the object to tell *what time it is*. The design of the map of timezones is also rotational, segmented in its divisions and anchored to one single source. Where clocks are objects in a tangible sense, timezones are to be objectified in another sense, as they cannot be picked up in their entirety. Timothy Morton's concept of *hyperobject* describes a type of object that exceeds human comprehension in the sense that they cannot be touched, seen or sensed in a bodily way. Their size is so vast that they exist beyond our sensing, yet we notice their local manifestation. Residing in local timezones, which cannot be seen but must be followed in order to be on time, we live in local discipline according to the timezone we are in.

Clocks, calendars, timezones participate alongside humans in the network of timekeeping. Time coordination works to anchor humans, devices and the social relations in networks that are based on the connections between these actors. Questioning the agency of the components of these systems of timekeeping, could challenge the effect

that the temporal objects have on the social world of humans? There is a power-relation built into the modern discipline mentioned by Latour that we may seek to question by means of *the untimely* as it sits in opposition to the clock. In case of an *untimely demise*, death comes unexpectedly, in default opposition to all possible planning, as do many other existential events that lend a poor temper to temporal planning.

Simply stated, clocks run on their own. Breaking one or breaking ten does not change the properties of timekeeping according to the timezone. Once these clocks are up and running, they will be reset to the cadence of earth's time-zones. Breaking the object that is a clock does not destroy its agency. Disregarding what time it is does not limit the pervasiveness of the global temporal system. *The untimely* cannot be found in changing the global state of the time-system by pretending it does not exist, nor by announcing our departure from it. *The untimely* can reside in understanding when to disregard the clock and when to take deliberate control over one's orientation towards the system of timekeeping. If we are to design *the untimely*, we should examine the system according to the purpose it serves and question the hierarchy in which the human relates to the non-human. Awareness of the agency of the timely is required to create its opposition.

When Latour criticizes the Modern, he describes temporality as a model that is built on the interpretation of time as a particular form of historicity used to sort events[33]. This temporality does not refer to time itself, but to a specific system of compartmentalization into which some events fit and others do not:

> there never have been anything but elements that elude the system…We have reached the point of mixing up times … we have to pass from one temporality to the other, since temporality itself, has nothing temporal about it. It is a means of connecting entities and filing them away.[34]

The untimely suggests venturing beyond this temporal filing system. *The untimely* seeks to evade the measure and construct of compartments that quantify time. This system

[33] Bruno Latour, *We have never been Modern* p 64
[34] Bruno Latour, *We have never been Modern* p 75

works but does not accommodate subjective experience. In defining *the untimely* as a construction of its own, ANT can be used to challenge the pervasive character of the clock. Tracing the objects, their discourse, the narrative of clock-time and the social bonds that they influence is an important act to avoid reducing the clock-as-object to a series of mere beings that sit passively in relation to their users and are only activated while in use. The clock and temporal systems do actual work in symbolic alliance with users as they are referred to for telling time.

There are other ways of telling time, such as estimating the time of day by looking at the sun, but the clock has global monopoly on the business of telling time accurately. Time on display transforms the space it occupies by influencing the way people behave – it is the purpose of clocks to be guiding objects through temporality to coordinate arrivals, meetings and departures. Within *the untimely*, I aim to arrive at a point of disclosing the purpose of these clocks and to become aware of their complacency in dictating our temporal behavior. I believe we should question how we relate to the time clocks show and be wary of the politics brought about by their form, placement and presence. The clock should not be assigned singular authority over keeping time, although the model it proposes is uniform and pervasive to an extent that the measure shown may be defined as “objective”. The agency of the clock is saturated by politics that represent a discipline that is economical, and a school of behavior that is inscribed into our practices. The clock can be interpreted through the lens of ANT to reveal its own agency. Describing the design, layout, placement and how the clock is referred to visually and through language, we may detect possible ways to build alterations into our temporal operations and make other approaches to temporality worthy of speculation.

Allowing multiple attitudes towards time will be confusing and may not be of immediate use but questioning temporal scripts and populating the world with differing discourses on time, with the aim of disrupting temporal monoculture, insists on the value of doing things differently.

Capitalist Temporality:

TIME AS MONEY ⇆ MONEY AS TIME

BODYCLOCKS AND SELF-TRACKING IN A NEO-LIBERAL ENVIRONMENT

> The spread of clock-time, then, is not simply a product of industrialization, but of *capitalist* industrialization … The extent to which abstract time is a necessary product of the structural mechanisms of capitalism [functions] as an economic system itself, not simply as an ideological byproduct of it.[35]

As mentioned in the preface; philosopher Henri Bergson observed how it is space that responds when we reflect on time. In the English language, time is often described in spatial terms, with wording that reveals a sense of movement *through* a time that is *passing.* It is important to note that capitalist economy has prompt replies of its own. Slogans such as "time is money" (Benjamin Franklin) reveal a translation of the meaning of time into terms that depict it as a resource that can be given, taken, spent and wasted. It escapes no attention of any member of homo economicus that the measure of time sits at the root of the econometrics that benchmark the state of productivity of capitalist society. Crudely stated, labor is remunerated according to the worth of each laborer's time, placing people in hierarchies of wages, worth and wealth. I will not attempt an evaluation of this economic system, nor unfold the history and political chemistries that caused capitalism to arrive at its contemporary state. However, understanding how time is inscribed into the economic currencies of capitalist civilization is crucial, because having the time and the freedom to pursue the project of *the untimely* does require that we can afford the upkeep of material privileges and necessities while we take the time to speculate. While criticizing the pervasive implementation of clock-time, performing labor that translates into money is indispensable to sustaining the project of resistance towards

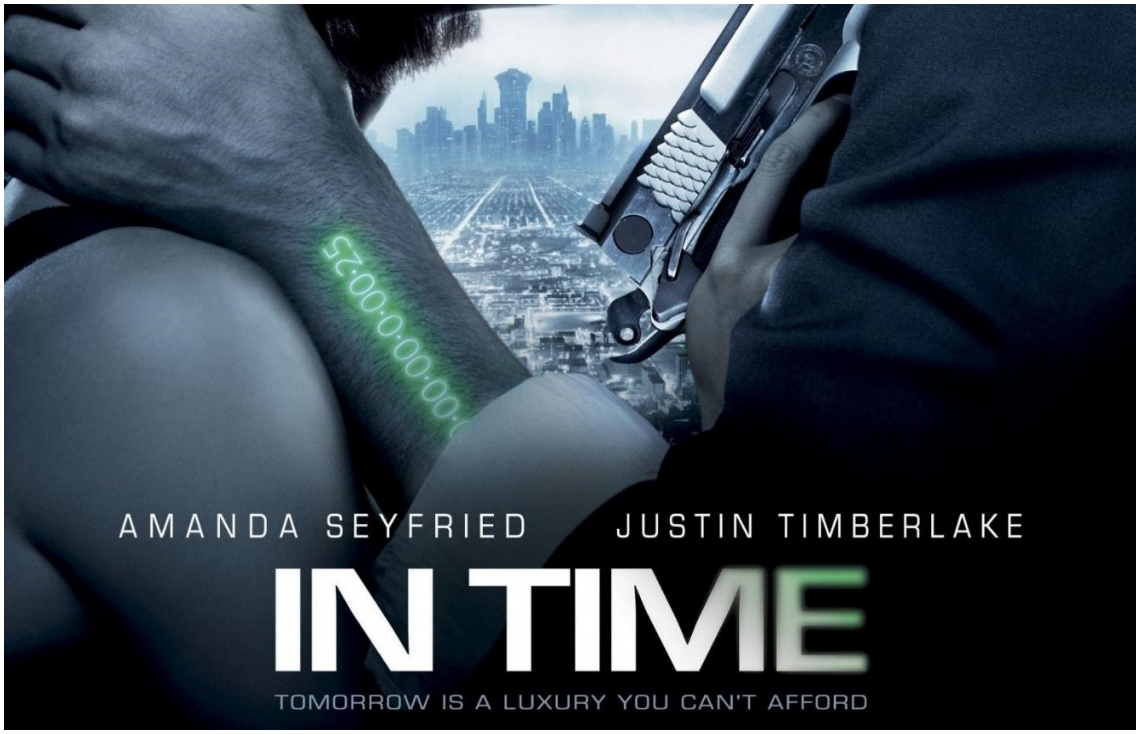
[35] Marc Abel, *Groove: An Aesthetic of Measured Time* p 190, p 193, p 194

clock-time rigidity. Profit and earnings cannot be excluded from the use of time without also removing individual sustenance.

Not proceeding to discuss *labor* specifically, it is worth referring to the many types of labor to profit from, some of which do not translate into money. Here, I regard *labor* as an issue of employment within a capitalist economy. Defining *labor* as a material necessity that occurs at the measure of the clock, the work that is done can be analyzed within the context of contemporary labor practices that are subjected to the worth of time. I will proceed to analyze the relation between time and currency through the movie *In Time* (2011).

The clocks is a tool suited to the measure of gaining capital in relation to time. Both economic progress as well as the mechanical progress of the clock—forwards movement in time is perceived as the default direction—were developed alongside the global expansion of capitalism. From the chronometers that were engineered as technological tools to ensure safer navigation of transcontinental trade by ship, to the smartwatches that are computers with extended functions of sensing for self-measure, clocks are members of a family of products that reflect the economic interests of the context in which they serve.

Bomber jacket Copenhagen Airport, September 2018 (Martha Hjorth Jessen)



Crop from movie poster

IN TIME, IN A HYPER-CAPITALIST WORLD OF FICTION

Planetary capitalism is constructed by means of property, accumulation and progress. Property resides on territories, and accumulation is wealth absorbed into real-estate or deposited in the bank. Progress lives by the clock in a race for growth.

Our guide in the journey from periphery to center within the theme of capitalism will be the main character, Will (played by Justin Timberlake), from the movie *In Time* (2011).

In a story with strong reference to the narrative of Robin Hood, Will sets out to steal time from the rich and give time to the poor. In a world saturated by an extreme form of capitalism that builds on Darwinist principles of *survival of the fittest*, there is no money, only time. In this setup, time is the only currency and the only means for both survival and exchange. Time is kept by everyone in the form of a digital body-clock that sits under the skin of the left arm. With this time, wages are paid and expenses are subtracted from the time a person has left to live – time and money is collapsed into one single form of capital. Each person has been genetically engineered to live a quarter of a century and upon turning 25, they stop ageing and their clocks start counting down. When their time runs out, a person dies at their last available second. At 25, the struggle to stay alive begins by earning, buying, stealing and acquiring clock-time to avoid running out of time.

Will lives as a member of the working class in Dayton, zone 12, the last timezone in a system where zones define urban areas according to class. We, the viewers, meet him on the day of his mother's 50th birthday—the day she turns 25 for the 50th time—before he heads to work in a factory that produces time-capsules, devices in which time can be kept and stored externally from the body-clocks. Acquiring enough time to stay alive and maintain an upkeep of life is the main struggle in zone 12, as inflation and increasing interest rates are imposed by the ruling classes that reside in New Greenwich, zone 1. We learn that this sci-fi world is socially segregated because there is not enough time for everyone, and the ruling classes wish to keep centuries for themselves to become immortal.

After a race against time where Will's mother runs to meet him instead of taking the bus for which the price of the fare has gone up and she no longer has enough time for a ticket, we witness them running towards each other, just a second too late for the transfer of time. Will's mother drops dead into his arms in her last remaining second.

Shortly before, Will received a generous donation of more than a century from a wealthy man who is tired of living. He exits the narrative with a message to Will, written on a dusty window; "don't waste my time". He shares with Will the insight that there would, in fact, be enough time for everyone to live full lives were time to be fairly distributed. Will, now a rich man with a wish for vengeance, travels through the time-zones, paying a fee of entry while passing each zone to finally arrive in New Greenwich, the zone where the most time-wealthy reside in luxury with plenty of time on their hands.

At a casino, Will bets his time in a game of poker against the owner of the credit institute that lends time to people, Mr Weis. As the game plays out, Mr Weis shares his view of the world and of how humanity is subjected to Darwinian capitalism–an order of natural selection and survival of the fittest. Will gambles down to his last available seconds with a winning hand that takes a century of time from Mr Weis. Meanwhile he has caught the attention of Sylvia Weis, Mr Weis' daughter, who moves around under the permanent protection of two bodyguards. When Will is revealed as an intruder from a lower zone, he takes Sylvia hostage. The two make their exit from the casino to escape towards Dayton. A chase begins as they are followed by the Timekeeper, a character who performs the role of the police and whose job it is to track large amounts of time occurring outside New Greenwich, taking it away from people of lower time-classes and thus ensuring that only the rich stay wealthy.

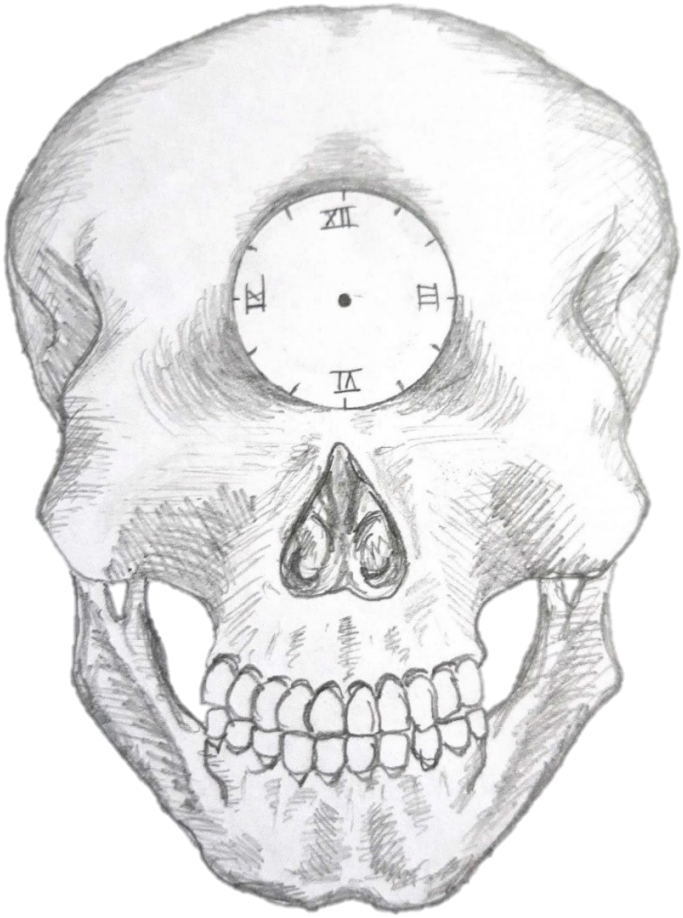
By Sylvia Weis' idea, now turning her duet with Will towards a Bonnie-and-Clyde set of characteristics, they rob a bank and then continue to pursue the robbery of a million years from the vault of Mr Weis. They succeed at the coup and manage to bring millions of years back to a mission center in Dayton, where the poor are now able to collect the time of

which they have been deprived. This leads to the collapse of the social zone order as borders are breached by masses of the oppressed working-class who migrate up through the zones and into New Greenwich, the place they could otherwise not afford to enter.

In Time tells the story of a world suffering from hyper-capitalism where the main event is a coup at the center of power, a move which redistributes accumulated time-wealth to the masses, forming a morally just society where no one has to die at the expense of someone else's prolonged survival. The coup, furthermore, is carried out against a ruling class that exercises a political ideology with brutal economic instruments the myopic view of accumulating the longest possible lifetime for themselves. With the possession of a wealth of time the upper classes differentiate their privileges from the lower classes which are oppressed in a constant struggle to remain alive.

By punching in Darwin's birthday as the code that opens the safe's lock, Sylvia reveals a deep understanding of the fundamental construction of the hyper-capitalism in the film. She and Will become protagonists in the narrative by breaking into the vault of neo-liberalism, hacking the order that separates people into social groups of time-wealthy and time-deprived. Will and Sylvia become thieves, with a moral upper hand and an understanding of the upkeep of an oppressive time-system, who design the coup that breaks the order at its source. Cunningly, they approach the center of power with a moral goal in mind.

The clock as portrayed in *In Time*, is fully integrated in the body with a measure for life as a sci-fi amplification of a smartwatch that is connected to an all-encompassing social system that regulates the human population through distribution of wealth.



Illustration, Martha Hjorth Jessen 2021

TEMPORAL MYOPIA

In behavioral economics, the term *temporal myopia* is used to describe a temporal short-sightedness in which decisions are made according to short-term measures of success. This vision discounts long-term perspectives.

THE WATCH AND OUR SENSE OF SELF

At any given time in history, the clocks that are used are produced by the same system that uses them (Abel). With the technological evolution that turned watches into computers came an expansion of the purpose of the clock. With the addition of sensors came services that, through software applications, have allowed watches to become devices with which other aspects of life can be tracked. Not only keeping wearers on time, watches and the clock-measure have long since accompanied sports performances that are often measured against time. Wearable devices, such as smartwatches, are now able to sensor and track the actions of the wearer – from counting the steps of movement, to tracking heart rate, to even detecting the physical reactions of the body that tells the wearer about their mood. The ability to monitor physical health has increased with the popularity of smartwatches, which provide a source of data that delivers information about the body. Sociologist Deborah Lupton researches the use of this technology, among others wearable devices, and how these influence the sense of self through the self-measuring data they enable wearers to collect. *The Quantified Self* is a term developed by a community of the same name[36] whose members self-track and share their data online. Their forum discusses how to best apply recorded data to the understanding of health. This private mode of self-tracking offers means for individuals to take responsibility for their general fitness by monitoring the body and taking control in a process that is curiously centered on the self. In opening the analysis of the state of the body through empirical data, collected through smartwatches, this method has potential to better our insights into ourselves. While this is constructive and opens the possibility of knowing the body according to data, this method of measuring also harnesses the self for additional labor. In a neo-liberal environment, the ideals of self-tracking and self-management feed into a narrative of what Lupton calls a "responsibilized healthy productive citizenship"[37] where citizens are encouraged to work on themselves and

[36] www.quantifiedself.com

[37] https://newbooksnetwork.com/deborah-lupton-the-quantified-self-polity-2016

regulate the body according to values of health connected to corporate productivity. Lupton warns that should we rely extensively on data to inform us about ourselves, the danger of being caught in a cartesian split of mind and body may reduce the worth of sensing what is felt by each human. A selfhood that is based on data is tangible and lends itself to competitive processes that involve comparisons of the metrics of others as well as the fitness achievements of former states of the self. Lupton warns against the inner subjective feeling of the body that can only be sensed, being replaced with the sole process of measuring its data. The two processes - sensing and measuring - should accompany each other in the process of knowing one's well-being.

Tendencies of perfecting the body to express the health-values of companies reveal ideals of *managerial athleticism* a term coined in the study "The body, identity and gender in managerial athleticism" (Johansson, Tienari and Valtonen)[38]. In the construction of healthy bodies with identities fit for management, bodies are trained to fit managerial lingo that describes contemporary corporate organization as *lean* and *agile* while performing *sprints*. In the pursuit of health and fitness, management consultants and members of the corporate C-suite that are the subjects of the study, engage in the exercise of endurance sports, shaping professional identities towards a lean, light and agile fitness that is performed with autonomous character and fits into busy schedules. In the study, which looked at how the body is a carrier of corporate identity, it was found that the main type of exercise among CEO's, COO's and HR directors focused on long-distance autonomous sports enabling them to construct the identity of their managerial self around "a physical corporeality of 'ideal' organizational members, or the 'appropriate' body [that] enables research participants to articulate and display a powerful sense of self as manager"[39].

[38] Johansson, Tienari and Valtonen in *The body, identity and gender in managerial athleticism*"
[39] Johansson et al.

As a consumer product, the smartwatch lends itself excellently to this practice with services that keep track of distance, speed, and that count steps and heart rate throughout the day. As lubricating devices in the process of constructing the ideal managerial body, a body that reflects the values of the company, the smartwatch caters to a corporate culture that leans on endurance, leanness and self-management as its cardinal values. Although the *Key Performance Indicators* (KPIs) delivered through these wearables may not solely serve the purpose of tracking fitness in the name of automanegerialism, a more profound process of sensing and being sensed takes place between clock and wearer that feeds into the ways social signals are to reflect how they wish to be seen and how they pursue their goals.

At the core of the practices that influence the design of the corporate identity, conceptions of time treat it as a primary resource, one which is not to be wasted but to be spent wisely and with the right orientation towards efficiency and profit. In response to this economic approach to time, an *untimely* argument proposes to keep focus on the importance of embodied knowledge – that which we sense about ourselves – in careful check with the data that can be collected. Purely quantifying the self should not overtake the balance of our subjective sense of self, as this would reduce wellbeing to a set of data.

The Act:

TROUBLING TIMES

THE UNTIMELY MINUTE CONSTRUCTED AT THE HEART OF TIME

> In these troubling times, the urgency to trouble time, to shake it to its core, and to produce collective imaginaries that undo pervasive conceptions of temporality that takes progress as inevitable and the past as something that has passed and is no longer with us is something so tangible, so visceral, that it can be felt in our individual and collective bodies[40] (Barad)

Perception as the inner experience of what happens around us, filtered through a sensing that is our own, is an apparatus that art cannot be conceived without. For me, the artist producing this work, constructing *the untimely* project that is this thesis, I want to describe the observation that sparked my initial research into the temporal, around which the sources I have sought resonate:

During Finnish winter, a few years ago, while recovering from a flu, I was walking in the low sunlight which is to be appreciated at such Northern latitudes. I perceived my movements in the world to be slower than normal and sensed sound and visual impressions at a different tempo. The pace allowed by my body was slow in motion. It felt as if my time had been slowed down. During an EKG, my pulse was measured at 44 beats per minute (the normal range for resting pulse in women is 60-80 bpm). For an athlete, a pulse this low is not unusual, but that was not my physical shape. After a week's time, I returned to my normal resting heart rate around 60 bpm. My perception of slowing down in time stuck with me, and I drafted a simple calculation.

[40] Karen Barad*, Troubling time/s and ecologies of nothingness: re-turning, re-membering, and facing the Incalculable* p 57

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Unusual situation: 44 bpm = 1 min
Usual situation: 60 bpm = 1 min

Time situation: 60 sec = 1 min

My normal tempo: 60 beats per minute
My current tempo: 44 beats per minute
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If my pulse was normal at 60 beats per minute, I was to be in time with the minute, like 60 seconds is the measure of the minute. In the unusual case of 44 beats per minute, and the sense of being slowed down in all bodily functioning, 44 bpm lowered the tempo of the beat of my usual minute. If I were to take this slowed heart rate as primary measure, and the 60 second minute as that which would be measured up against my minute, I would have turned around the relation between heart rate and minute, creating instead a variable measure. What if the quantification of the minute—normally formed by 60 seconds—would be subjective to the person measuring? What if we would allow a subjective measure, determined by our own pulse, to be added to the objective measure of the minute given by the clock?

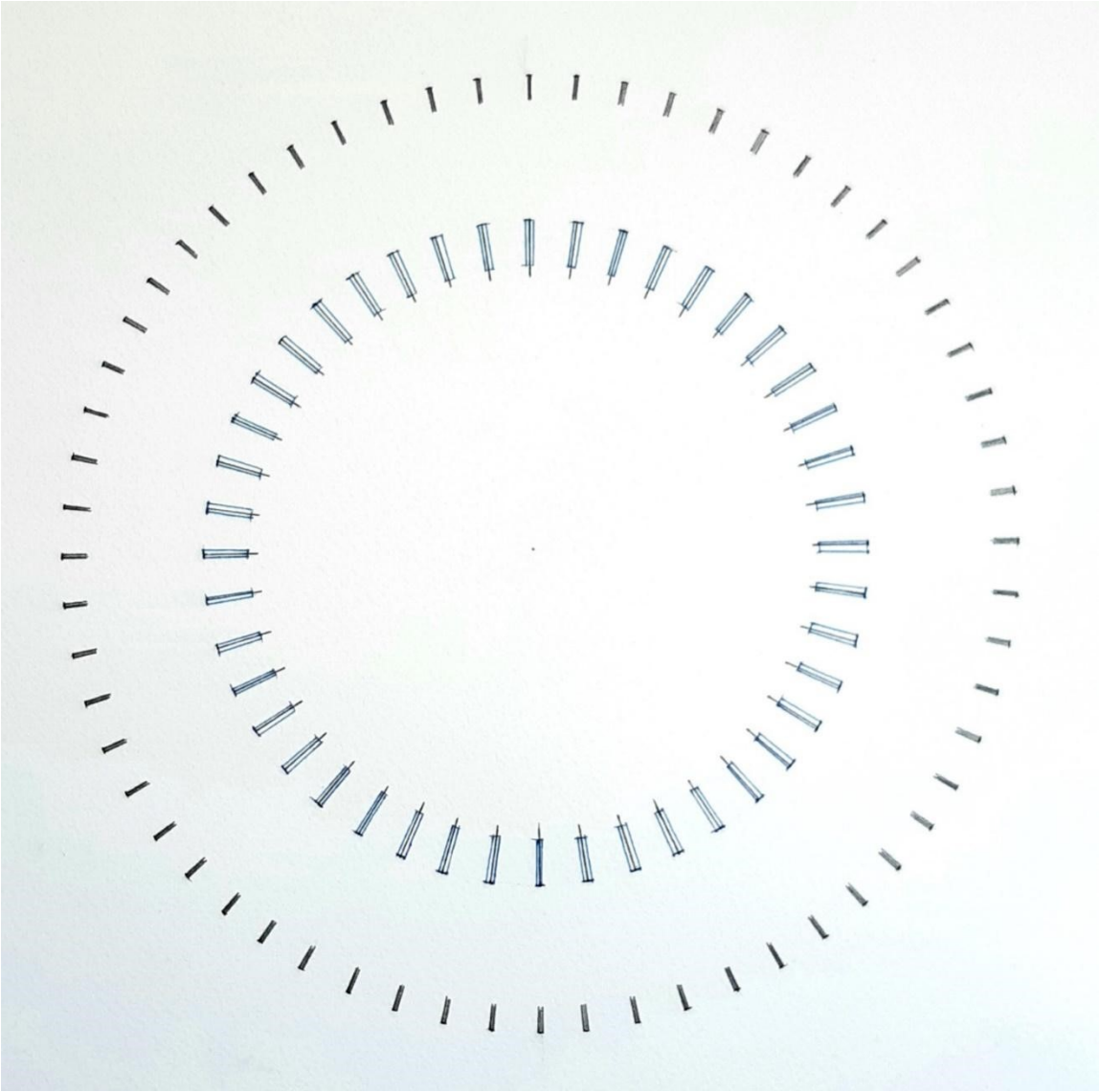
The suggestion seemed absurd in a satisfyingly conceptual way, as this would immediately shift the format we agree to practice time by and would make chaos out of counting to a shared beat of 60 seconds to the minute. Changing the count towards a subjective beat coming from within leads to an embodied tempo as primary measure for time, one that is guided from within instead of seeking to fit our personal tempo to the externalized measure of a predetermined beat. With the drop from 60 bpm to 44 pbm, I felt myself becoming *untimely* in a way that altered my sense of the world around me and my sense of self as located within it.

My analytical framework is built around this alternate experience of the temporal and concerns itself with how the measure given by clocks is based on stakes that do not accommodate the subjective experience of time.

As a suggestion for the collective imaginary that needs to be produced in order to *trouble time*, I propose the idea of supplying the clock-time regimen with an experience of the subjective beat that we each hold the source of. This beat is found at the 'small non-time space in the very heart of time' which Arendt talks about as a place for mental activity, a place to think, in The Life of the Mind[41]. Individual and fluctuating with our level of activity (and athletic shape), pulse makes a personal recording of the passing minute by means of a tempo. Instead of holding the experience of time accountable to 60 beating seconds, *the untimely* pays due attention to sensing what can be felt subjectively.

Although, a higher heart rate would not necessarily lead to a perception of a quicker pace of the world, following the concept proposed through my crude mathematical equation of an internal measure for time, suggests a step closer to the center of the clock by making the tempo of the beat a subjective matter.

[41] Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind - Thinking* p 210



The untimely minute, outer circle: 60 seconds, inner circle 44 bpm

Although artists are professionals at producing new knowledge that springs from the senses, perception and individual interpretation—knowledge that could stand on its own in simple relation to the aesthetics to which this knowledge relates—I still find it important to suggest making that which is perceived a primary source of information. Karen Barad, a physicist that works in the field of feminism and gender studies,

researching the relationship between embodied experience and quantum physics, places *bodies* at the beginning of understanding how things relate. To build further on this approach, I will turn to Isabelle Stengers, known for her work in the philosophy of science, in this case, looking specifically at her reading of Alfred North Whitehead:

> Interpretation is a serious, vital, business, never to be reduced to 'mere interpretation'...Any strategy of explaining away, of reducing some aspects of our experience to others, has to be resisted. Everything that we experience must matter... apart from the experience of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness.[42]

To make *the untimely* a place of being, a place from which to produce knowledge, we must insist that our perceived experience of time is of great value—of the greatest value—to the work produced. If we are to orient ourselves to the universal measure of the minute, we join into a collective beat of time. This is functional and facilitates our participation in the networks that require temporal management. The *untimely minute*, and its construct through the heartbeat that is felt at intimate and personal range, an additional format that allows subjectively constructing a temporal duration that differs from the collective tempo, can provide a measure for tempo at an individual scale. By recording our own heart rate, we pay "due attention [which] means becoming able to add, not subtract; it means learning how to get relevant access, not renouncing the possibility of any such access."[43] *The untimely* is not a project of deconstructing the timely to form remote opposition, rather the project I propose and the attention I wish us to pay to defining *the untimely* requires that we do not allow ourselves to be seduced by the service of clocks or the gadget formats through which time is delivered. As an artist, I believe that working with the world using the entire perceptive apparatus that is available to me is paying *due attention* in a way that allows me to add my observation to the

[42] Isabelle Stengers, *A Constructivist Reading of Process and Reality* p 99, p 100, p 103 (quoting Whitehead)
[43] Stengers p 99

concepts that already exist. With historical reference to the earliest machines of timekeeping, and through using my heart rate as a key to the construction of the *untimely minute*, I suggest we rethink our relationship to time, seeing it as a matter of interpretation. Galilei measured the swinging incense lamp of the church according to the beats of his pulse and was able to construct the experiments that led to the invention of the pendulum clock. At the foundation of the history of timekeeping lies a human pulse. I suggest reintroducing this individual measure - an example of embodied sense of time - to redesign the minute in a format which is subjective and has more to do with tempo than with quantitative measure.

Conclusion:

THE CENTER

Distanced from the periphery, yet completely within the system of clock-time itself, a conceptual space around the center of the face of the clock is assigned a *zone*. This space in time is at our disposal as an underexploited plateau that is available as a figurative place where we may withdraw to sense, discuss and speculate on the construction of new imaginaries. Withdrawing from the rotation of the periphery to respite at the center, at this smaller inconspicuous space in the very heart of time, does not aim to get rid of clocks with the aim of achieving timelessness. Temporal practices will remain at work at the periphery while *the untimely* focuses on producing a mental habitat through a temporary suspension of clock-time regimes that otherwise tie us in ongoing rotation and inevitable

progress. More resemblant of a safe space constituted by agreements that take vulnerabilities and multiplicity into account, the place at the center aims to make space for a profoundly subjective experience of time through sensing and questioning. Pointing at the temporal territory of *the untimely*—the simultaneous being *in* and *out* of time—the project produces practices where alternative approaches to temporality are permitted. The discussion which *the untimely* suggests is not intended to make things work differently straight away, nor is it intended to produce new answers or reproduce old ones. The philosophy of *the untimely* is to work on a myriad of replies, produce an organic mess of options, to tease, to ponder and to insist that there must be other ways of practicing within the temporal that are not immediate servants to the market and not conceptualized with the aim of practical implementation. Through discussions of productive refusal, the project inserts a stick in the hamster-wheel, pausing its motion and making time for an exit, suggesting we take critical distance from the purpose of the speed conundrum that appears to go in circles. It is important to avoid losing deep sensing and profound mental activity in the chase for efficiency and rapid growth that forms the unbroken continuity of the business of the world. If capitalism has a blinding effect on our senses while we look towards the clock, let us make use of an *untimely* approach to disregard the rigid accuracy of clocks for a moment and give ourselves time off from the profit-time equation.

The untimely offers a place of recess to resist the regimen of schedules and confining temporal scripts. This practice may not increase our individual happiness, nor does it promise to deliver salvation from all temporal obligations. While the conventional time apparatus stays in play at the periphery, we should take time to contemplate its limitations and to explore the potential for alternative practices at its center.

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